

I. AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Cancel claim 3 without prejudice to renewal.

Please enter the amendments to claims 1, 4, and 6, as shown below.

Please enter new claims 20-23, as shown below.

1. **(Currently amended)** A method of detecting asymmetric dimethylarginine (ADMA) in a sample comprising ADMA and at least one of symmetric dimethylarginine (SDMA) [,] and arginine, the method comprising the steps of:

a) contacting the sample with an agent that protects the α -amino group of ADMA and the α -amino group of the at least one of SDMA and arginine, generating a sample comprising ADMA having a protected α -amino group and at least one of SDMA and arginine having a protected α -amino group;

[[a)] b) contacting [[a)] the sample generated in step (a) with an α -dicarbonyl compound, ~~wherein said sample comprises ADMA and at least one of SDMA and arginine,~~ wherein said α -dicarbonyl compound modifies the guanidino nitrogens of SDMA and the guanidino nitrogens of arginine, producing modified SDMA and modified arginine, wherein said modified SDMA and said modified arginine are distinguishable from ADMA; and

[[b)] c) detecting ADMA in the sample generated in step (b).

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said α -dicarbonyl compound is phenylglyoxal.

3. **(Cancelled)**

4. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1 [[3]], wherein the agent that protects the α -amino group is modified with a dye that provides a detectable signal.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting step comprises contacting the sample with an antibody that binds specifically to ADMA, to SDMA, or to both ADMA and SDMA, wherein said antibody does not bind to the modified SDMA.

6. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1 [[3]], wherein said detecting step comprises contacting the sample with an antibody that binds specifically to the α -amino group-modified ADMA.

7. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the antibody is detectably labeled.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said ADMA is detected by high performance liquid chromatography.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said ADMA is detected by capillary electrophoresis.
- 10.-14. (Canceled)
15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the α -dicarbonyl compound is selected from biacetyl, pyruvic acid, glyoxal, methyglyoxal, deoxyosones, 3-deoxyosones, malondialdehyde, 2-oxopropanal, phenylglyoxal, 2,3-butanedione, and 1,2-cyclohexanedione.
16. (Canceled)
17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the sample is a biological sample.
18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the dye is a fluorophore.
19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, further comprising detecting one or more of modified SDMA and modified arginine, wherein said detection of one or more of modified SDMA and modified arginine comprises contacting the sample with an antibody that binds specifically to one or more of modified SDMA and modified arginine.
20. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the fluorophore is fluoro-7-nitrobenzofurazan.
21. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the agent that protects the α -amino group is ortho-phthaldialdehyde.
22. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the biological sample is serum or plasma.
23. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the biological sample is subjected to solid phase extraction before step (a).